

Introducing Your ...

Indiana
Office of
Utility
Consumer
Counselor

The Advocate for Indiana's
Utility Consumers



A Message from Indiana's Utility Consumer Counselor

Dear Utility Consumer:

Over the years, the vast majority of Hoosiers have come to expect reliable and low-cost utility services. The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) has worked hard to achieve this result and is proud of our successful advocacy on behalf of utility consumers.

There is more work to be done, however, and the OUCC is prepared to meet this challenge. Whether the issue is ensuring high quality and reliable utility service at the lowest price possible or ensuring a fair transition to a more competitive utility market, the OUCC is an ally for Indiana's utility consumers.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor is committed to being an active advocate on behalf of utility consumers. I encourage you to contact us with your questions, concerns and comments regarding any utility matter. We welcome your input.

Sincerely,

Anne E. Becker

Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor

What is the OUCC?

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is the state agency that represents the interests of all utility consumers and the public in matters related to the provision of electric, natural gas, telephone, water and sewer services in Indiana.

The OUCC was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1933. The agency's director, the Utility Consumer Counselor, is appointed by the Governor and serves a four-year term.

The OUCC currently employs a staff of 55 attorneys, accountants, engineers, economists, financial analysts and support personnel.

What does the OUCC do?

State Regulatory Proceedings

One of our most important duties is to represent consumers in proceedings before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC). These proceedings cover most aspects of a utility's business including its rates, service quality and service territory.

The IURC is the state agency that regulates most utilities operating in Indiana. (Certain exceptions may apply to: cooperative, municipal and not-for-profit utilities; utilities with fewer than 300 customers; regional water or sewer districts; and conservancy districts) In making its decisions, the IURC hears evidence presented by the utility, the OUCC, and possibly others, and then makes the ruling it feels balances the interests of all the parties involved.

To promote utility consumer interests, the OUCC's attorneys, accountants, engineers, economists, and financial analysts review rate requests; examine

utility accounting and financial records; inspect facilities; prepare depreciation and cost of service studies; determine appropriate cost of capital; and use computer modeling to analyze resource options. The information gathered from this work is then filed as testimony in proceedings before the IURC and used to support our recommendation of a fair and appropriate decision for consumers.

Trial and Appellate Courts

OUCG attorneys also practice before trial and appellate courts to ensure that Indiana utility consumer rights are fully protected. Court action occurs when an unfavorable IURC decision is appealed or when the OUCG finds that action needs to be taken against a utility not under the IURC's jurisdiction.

Federal Regulatory Proceedings

The OUCG also represents Indiana utility consumers before federal regulatory agencies, such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington, D.C.

Public Policy

The OUCG provides assistance to legislators, the IURC and federal agencies when issues are raised that affect the interests of utility consumers.

Consumer Education

As the telecommunications, natural gas and electric industries evolve from a traditional, regulated environment to one that is more competitive, the OUCG will continue to provide consumers with practical information designed to assist them in making important decisions regarding utility services. We see this as vital to our role as the representative of Indiana utility consumers.

How the OUCC can assist you

Source of Information

The OUCC is committed to providing timely, useful and impartial information to utility consumers in order to assist them in making wise, utility-related decisions. This includes written material on natural gas prices, telephone "slamming" and "cramming" issues, and how to understand your telephone bill. New publications are developed and distributed as warranted.

OUCC employees are also available to talk with consumers at various outreach events throughout the year. We also offer speakers to service clubs and other organizations, free of charge.

Consumer Services Staff

If you have a problem with your electric, natural gas, telephone, water or sewer utility that you have not been able to resolve, we encourage you to contact the OUCC. Our consumer services representatives are available to assist you.

To help us resolve your utility complaint, we ask that you keep notes on all phone calls (date, time, contact name, summary of discussion) and copies of all correspondence related to the problem and your attempts to resolve it.

Assisting consumers with their utility complaints is an important aspect of our representation of utility consumers. Solving individual consumer problems provides valuable information regarding deficiencies in particular areas. With this knowledge, we can then work to solve the larger problem through the appropriate means.

Contact Information



Our Mission

The state agency that represents consumers with integrity and professionalism in obtaining high quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable price possible through vigorous advocacy, education and innovation.

We want to hear from you!

If you have a question or concern regarding your electric, natural gas, telephone, water or sewer utility service, please let us know. We will make every effort to assist you with a problem, and your feedback will help us better serve all utility consumers. We welcome your input.

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